



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07489405 0



8-\*\*\*  
Call

~



L

A PLEA FOR  
SHAKESPEARE AND  
WHITMAN

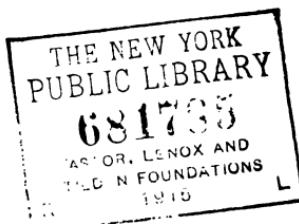
SOME FINDINGS FOR PERSONS WHO  
LIKE TO DO THEIR OWN THINKING

BY  
WILLIAM TIMOTHY CALL

NEW Price, 50 Cents  
PUBLISHER  
LIBERTY

W. T. CALL  
669 East Thirty-Second Street  
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

1914  
S. O. N.



COPYRIGHT, 1914, BY  
WILLIAM TIMOTHY CALL

WILLIAM  
TIMOTHY  
CALL

PART I  
**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

PART II  
**WALT WHITMAN**

LIBRARY  
PUBLIC

UNION NATIONAL  
CIGARETTES  
WORLD FAMOUS

## PREFACE

THOSE we call great are commonplace part of the time, cheap or weak often, high or mighty on occasion. To the hero worshipper clay is marble; pyrites, gold.

Now and then a great man has so fixed things that he cannot be apotheosized. We know, for example, that Ben Franklin was a human being.

There is a book by Mark Twain called "What Is Man?" It is referred to as his suppressed book. Even wealthy collectors find it hard to land a copy. Some of his friends considered it injudicious to let the famous humorist's serious convictions become generally known. Yet it is a fascinating brief on the subject covered by its title. This is the way Mark starts his honestinjin little book:

"The studies for these papers were begun twenty-five or twenty-seven years ago. The papers were written seven years ago. I have examined them once or twice per year since,

and found them satisfactory. I have just examined them again, and am still satisfied that they speak the truth. Every thought in them has been thought (and accepted as unanswerable truth) by millions upon millions of men—and concealed, kept private. Why did they not speak out? Because they dreaded (and could not bear) the disapproval of the people around them. Why have I not published? The same reason has restrained me, I think. I can find no other."

It is pleasant, and possibly profitable, to stray from the calfpath once in a while. As to that curious affair, truth, we all learn in time some funny things; as, for instance, that a grain of jealousy may outweigh a ton of justice in spite of gravity. We also discover at an early age that we must *conform*, if we wish to be liked. But a schoolboy beginning Latin soon sees that even the little *tot* has opinions.

Well, what difference does it make, anyway?

W. T. CALL.

*New York, July, 1914.*



**PART I**  
**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

---

2. 100

# I

## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WHAT heaps and heaps and heaps of stuff and nonsense have been piled on the head of William Shakespeare! Was he a man among men, or was he a demigod disguised as a man?

They tell us that his understanding was superhuman, and that it grew by neglect. They say he knew everything by intuition. They say he "rises to the height of heaven itself."

If by any hocus-pocus he could be brought to life and placed in the midst of the prodigious accumulation of laudation and mock wisdom his writings have caused, he might exclaim (for I believe he was the kind of man to do it):

"What rubbish! What rot! So I am the unapproachable, the peerless paragon, the myriad minded, the universal genius, the soul of the world. What fools *these* mortals be!"

When a man does a good job, he knows it, usually. Shakespeare, it would seem, was not

aware of the profundity of his own mind. He knew he was writing successful plays, but neither he nor his friends suspected that his was the giant intellect of all time. A few years ago an investigator, who had made a special study of the self-consciousness of great men, declared in his book that Shakespeare had no expectation of being known to posterity.

Now here is a sentence by another specialist that caused me to pause and ponder:

"The majority of men in every age are superficial in character and brittle in purpose, and lead uneducated lives; swarming together in buzzing crowds in all haunts of amusement and places of low competition, caring little for anything but gossip and pastime, the titillation of the senses and the gratification of conceit."

It was for just such persons as these that Shakespeare wrote his plays. He did not write them to be read. He wrote them for the theater. He was an actor of no marked ability. He became a proprietor of theaters. He wrote at the rate of two plays a year. The manuscripts he made for the theater were *clean* and without alterations. He did not col-

lect them for publication. He wrote them to make money. He got both money and admiration. His life was not more eventful than that of the average man.

He gave financial help to his father, who had been mayor of Stratford. He was able to retire, with an income equal to perhaps \$7,000 a year now. He had a family, a fine estate, many friends, lived like a country gentleman, and died at the age of fifty-two in the year 1616.

Note that date, as it is one of the landmarks of history, and will help you to locate in a general way the time of many other great men and events. Shakespeare was the grand bridge uniting the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Stories that were known to the public of his period were the ones Shakespeare dramatized. "The plots were generally borrowed," says an authority, adding: "For his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama had they not held the thread of the story in their hands."

He took what he wanted anywhere he found it, and dished it up to suit his hearers, most of whom were illiterate. They must

have plenty of blood and thunder, plenty of bombast, plenty of horseplay, plenty of extravaganza—and plenty of obscurity. As to what we call “the unities,” he let time and place mix as they would, so long as he could get the effect of action, excitement, or wonderment.

He got much of his raw material from ballads, old chronicles, and current English versions of the works of the ancients or of foreign writers. He had what is equivalent now to a grammar-school education.

When he was about twenty-two years old he went to London, got some kind of a job at one of the theaters, acted in minor parts—and then he saw something. He saw what nowadays would be described as a long-felt want. That is, he saw that instead of miracle plays, mystery shows, and pageantry, what his audience needed was an exciting tale told in a stagey way, with high-sounding declamation, stilted dialogue, and impressively obscure phraseology. Others had seen the same thing, but he was the first to do it with genius; and thus he became the father of English drama. His method aided him in his wonderful portrayal of character and the pas-

sions, and enabled him to work in wisdom, wit, sublimity, and beauty.

He was a man of keen business ability, and his disregard of the fate of his manuscripts after they had served the purpose of the day has not been accounted for. He did not publish them, and does not appear to have seen any future value in them.

Nineteen of the thirty-six plays, however, were printed in a piratical way from copies that had been made at the theater or from the manuscripts themselves; but he is believed to have had no hand in preparing these issues, which are known to collectors as the "early quartos." No one at that time seems to have realized the full importance of his work. Seven years after his death two of his friends, having succeeded in gathering his manuscripts, published them in a memorial edition of three hundred copies. This was in 1623, and that edition is known as the "first folio." It has been called the "only authentic text." We are told that only forty-eight copies were sold in fifty years, and that the rest were probably destroyed in a fire. In 1632, 1664, and 1682, the folio was reprinted. Writers sometimes speak of the folios as the "ancient editions."

For a hundred years from the time of Shakespeare's activity his fame languished. When he was admired it was principally by poets and scholars. The awakening came in 1709, and the world from that day to this has glorified his name.

But it is not the way of the world to worship merit for merit's sake alone. There is always something besides merit that brings the crowd to its feet, and turns judgment into adoration. You and I would like to know what that something is in this particular instance, and perhaps we may be able to get a glimpse of it.

We must go away back to the vital springs of human nature to get the right start in our quest.

What do we all crave?

Power, ease, love.

Then, what do we want?

Recreation.

How do we get the most satisfactory recreation?

By exercising the powers that in us are.

And what may we call this agreeable exercise?

We may call it a game.

Now we may start in to find out what this Shakespeare game is that for more than two centuries has fascinated our men of erudition. There seems to be no finality in it. What A finds, B throws away; what B sets up, C knocks down; what C sees, D d's; and so on through the alphabet, back again, on again, off again, gone again.

The chief elements in this great pastime and some of the main leads are as follows:

1—First Folio, 1623; called “one of the worst printed books that ever came from the press”; all mixed up in spelling, punctuation, and arrangement; described as “incomprehensible confusion”; more than 20,000 errors to be puzzled out.

2—Second Folio, 1632; a reprint worse than the First.

3—Third Folio, 1664; ditto.

4—Fourth Folio, 1682; same as Third.

5—Rowe's Revision, 1709; Shakespeare's first real editor, a poet and scholar.

6—Pope's Edition, 1725; plenty of guess-work and new ideas.

7—Theobald's *Shakespeare Restored*, 1726; showing Pope's blunders.

8—Theobald's Improved Edition, 1733;

with conjectures as to what the text should be.

9—Hanmer's Oxford Edition, 1744; improved or injured Theobald's text; introduced some of his own ideas, of course.

10—Warburton's Edition, 1747; alters text to suit his fastidious taste.

11—Dr. Johnson's Edition, 1765; the great Doctor has been accused of being unable to *see* Shakespeare because he was not a worshipper.

12—Capell's Edition, 1768; described as "murky"; made a collection of text variations by others.

The game is progressing now in scientific style. One historian says: "At about this time Shakespearean criticism became rampant. From that day commentary trod on commentary, and panting pamphleteers toiled on after each other in never-ending struggle to reach the true text of Shakespeare, a goal which seemed to recede faster than their advance."

13—Steevens's Edition, 1773; "ruthlessly mutilated or patched up Shakespeare's lines."

14—Malone's Edition, 1790; begins to get back to first principles.

15—Boswell's Variorum Edition, 1821; "a

rich storehouse of Shakespearean literature," with "heaps of dross and rubbish."

16—Now the editors, compilers, commentators, and only correct correctors come so fast that the estimate a few years ago of ten thousand different books, pamphlets, and essays on William Shakespeare is like a guess at the number of pins in the world. Shakespearean school books, stage books, and gift books alone amount to thousands.

A game of chess on a board of a thousand squares, with a relative number of pieces, would not be equal in vastness to this Shakespearean pastime, the field of which may be glanced at thus:

20,000 errors.

36 plays.

19 quartos.

4 folios.

6 spurious or doubtful plays.

20 eighteenth century editions.

1,000,000 critical surmises.

The object of the game is to guess what Shakespeare wrote, what there was in his mind when he wrote, and to discover whether he was a man, a myth, or a monstrosity. The

purpose of those participating in the contest is to knock each other down, to get the highest mark for pedantry, pretense, and folly, and to touch the highest point in preposterous adoration.

In spite of the infinity of possibilities the game is now nearly at a standstill, practically exhausted. In its later stages the craze took the form of parallelisms, cryptograms, ciphers, and concealed autobiographies of Shakespeare in such characters as Hamlet and Henry the Fifth. There were thousands of Shakespeare societies, sodalities, and problem clubs.

How did he spell his name?

Who wrote his plays?

Are they prose or poetry?

There are thinkers so profound that they have dug out the soul of Mother Goose, and have shown us all the allegorical truths in her imperishable jingles.

The Shakespeare game is like the tulip mania of his time—a contest in craziness. Here is a fair sample of the conclusions reached by the obsessed:

"If most men were to save up all the gayety of their whole lives, it would come to about the gayety of one speech in Falstaff."

You and I, perhaps unwisely, insist on loving Mother Goose for what she is to us, and we insist, maybe secretly, in loving Shakespeare for what he is to us as we find him. We are told by the scholars that we must not try to analyze him—that “all he needs is comprehension.”

Yes, that is all Shakespeare needs—*comprehension*. But there's the rub. Whose *comprehension* are we to use? He apparently expected people to use their own common sense. That means courage. Allow me to put you to the test. Without calling on the Shakespearean elucidators for aid try the following bit of dialogue from “King Henry IV.”

*Davy.* Doth the man of war stay all night, sir?

*Shallow.* Yes, Davy; I will use him well. A friend i'the court is better than a penny in purse. Use his men well, Davy, for they are arrant knaves and will backbite.

*Davy.* No worse than they are back-bitten, sir; for they have marvelous foul linen.

*Shallow.* Well conceited, Davy. About thy business, Davy.

If you have difficulty in the *comprehension* of this extract, perhaps you may get on the track by observing how the opening lines in

"The Merchant of Venice" are treated by a popular annotator:

*Antonio.* In sooth, I know not why I am so sad:  
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;  
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,  
What stuff 't is made of, whereof it is born,  
I am to learn;  
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me  
That I have much ado to know myself.

*Salarino.* Your mind is tossing on the ocean;  
There, where your argosies with portly sail,  
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,  
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,  
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,  
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,  
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

The notes of comprehension to this passage are in part as follows:

ACT I, SCENE I. Is the key-note struck in the first few lines, as in the first scene in "Macbeth"?—  
I. sooth, reality, truth. A. S. *sodh, sōth*. "At first the present participle of Aryan *as*, to be," says Skeat. Hence applied to what really *is*. What compounds?—Effect of alliteration here? in line 6? 14? generally?—Explain Antonio's sadness. Is it liver trouble [Booth]? Is he anxious about property? Is it a foreboding of evil? spleen? expected loss of a companion? ill health? something else?

*And so on, with word after word, down to:*

*On the flood.* Hudson, Dyce, and Stevens here change *on* to *of*. Judiciously?—The Venetians may well be said to live *on* the sea. *Douce.*

And so forth, and so on; but I think we have had enough to make it plain that there has been something else at work to make Shakespeare wonderful besides Shakespeare himself. They have had great fun with the Bard.

We have now come to the puzzle that interests you and me—was Shakespeare so much greater than he was aware of, or was his own estimate of himself the correct one? It was correct for a century from the time he wrote. He was not deified during that period.

To get at this thing in a way that may be agreeable to some of us, it is perhaps worth while to look at it from an unusual point of view. First we will call on old Peter Parley to set us down squarely (as he usually does) by the following general remarks:

“Should an author of our day write a poem of equal merit, and in the same vein, as the best that Roman antiquity has handed down to us, it would be received with indifference, if not contempt. It is not, therefore, the

---

positive merit of these renowned productions which extorts the praise of mankind; it is, at least in part, the associated charm of antiquity that bestows upon them their power."

Then we call on Dr. Johnson, the czar of literature near the end of the eighteenth century, to say something about Shakespeare, thus:

"He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence, but perhaps not one play which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion."

Then we take the following from Taine's estimate:

"This exuberant fecundity intensified qualities already in excess, and multiplied a hundred-fold the luxuriance of metaphor, the incoherence of style, and the unbridled vehemence of expression. That is why in the eyes of writers of the seventeenth century Shakespeare's style is the most obscure, pretentious, painful, barbarous, and absurd that could be imagined."

This by Richard Grant White is also to be taken into consideration:

"Shakespeare invented nothing, and created

nothing but character. The greatest of dramatists, he contributed to the drama nothing but himself; the greatest of poets, he gave to poetry not even a new rhythm or a new stanza."

We are thus led to believe:

That Shakespeare wrote plays for the same purpose that Dion Boucicault and Ed Harrigan wrote plays—to entertain audiences.

That he dramatized popular stories, and invented no plots.

That his main object was to make a temporarily effective play.

That he preferred bombastic language, fantastic words, cheap puns, puerile quibbling, and obscure expression.

That the oriental habit of distortion of images and abuse of the imagination was his.

That his idolators have put more into his lines than he himself did.

Viewing Shakespeare from these premises, we may appreciate that which is great in his work without frenzy. It must be remembered, however, that it is this very state of mind that is the chief delight of that horde of adepts whose fear was that they might fall short in their fanaticism.

The first difficulty the ordinary person meets in reading Shakespeare's plays is the strangeness of the language. He used twice as many different words as another writer would use in the same amount of product. He used the most astonishing phrases he could get hold of—in somewhat the same way a baseball reporter does to-day. It made no difference to him whether the expression was common or uncommon. It was the right kind of stage talk, and his audience comprehended it without the aid of a demonstrator, as he was not trying to shoot over their heads.

There is no sense in extreme efforts to interpret or translate Shakespeare for modern readers. The turns of expression that were effective in his day become easy enough reading after one is somewhat familiar with his dramatic style, and it is only now and then that the obsolete words themselves make the meaning uncertain. Try "The Merchant of Venice" without a glance at glossary or notes.

Few persons really enjoy reading drama, and it has been said that if Shakespeare had presented his plays in ordinary dialogue without employing blank verse we should all have been better able to judge his greatness.

When we speak of the poetry of Shakespeare we usually refer to that embraced in his plays. His poems proper, *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, the Sonnets, and other pieces less frequently spoken of, are a separate department of his works. The poems were the product of his young manhood, and were published by his direction. They are the tail to his kite, and they too have been glorified. As a whole, they fall short of his dramas, and are not equal to similar productions by some other great poets. You can easily test that opinion for yourself by comparing selections from his poems to be found in the anthologies of verse with those of other poets. The selections are usually confined to a few of his Sonnets, some of which are masterpieces.

As to the ten or twelve lyrics and dirges extracted from his dramas by eulogists, I think you will not find one of them comparable with that bit of translation work by his friend Ben Jonson, beginning, "Drink to me only with thine eyes." Palgrave's "Golden Treasury" has twenty, and Charles A. Dana's "Household Book of Poetry" eleven, of his one hundred and fifty-four Sonnets.

Of the kind of imagery we look for, and

find, in Byron, Tennyson, Longfellow, and Whittier, you may discover more in his Sonnets than I do; and you may not agree with me that the following quatrain is his most striking simile:

Like as the waves make toward the pebbled shore  
So do our minutes hasten to their end;  
Each changing place with that which goes before,  
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.

In my boyhood I worked hard to get a "comprehension" of Shakespeare's greatness, with and without guidance. When I came to a passage that had become as household words, I joyously exclaimed: "I see it; I see it!" But when I came to passages that I felt must be great, although having no familiar landmarks in them, I had to say in despair: "I don't see it; I don't see it!"

This discouragement wore off as I learned to find satisfaction in reading Shakespeare in the same way I read other masters—learned to regard him as a human being instead of a fetish. I was able to see that many were adoring him not so much for his work as for his *currency*. They found him the safest thing in all literature to tie up to. They could *hitch the wagon to the star*. Everything could

be called deeply significant—could be admired without discrimination. Dross stamped with that name became gold. The best need be no better than the worst. Obscurity became sublimity; platitude, wisdom; buffoonery, genius. That which seems to be cheap and poor is not really so to those who have the “comprehension.”

Well, here we are with our unpopular views, and the question is where is the fire. It is there surely enough, but how are we to get at it for ourselves? It is, I think, in the astounding power of Shakespeare in tearing out the minds and hearts of men and women, and showing them framed in strange forms of speech. Everything is made to palpitate dramatically. Art and wisdom are there in fantastic dress. I say men and women, for, unlike Dickens, he did not cover all periods of life equally well. He did not do much with childhood, probably because his vehicle was plays; and, besides, children in his time were brats. He covered love and hate and madness and silliness in men and women from youth to middle age—the season of power. He seems to have created a kind of science of human nature, and we turn to him as to a master.

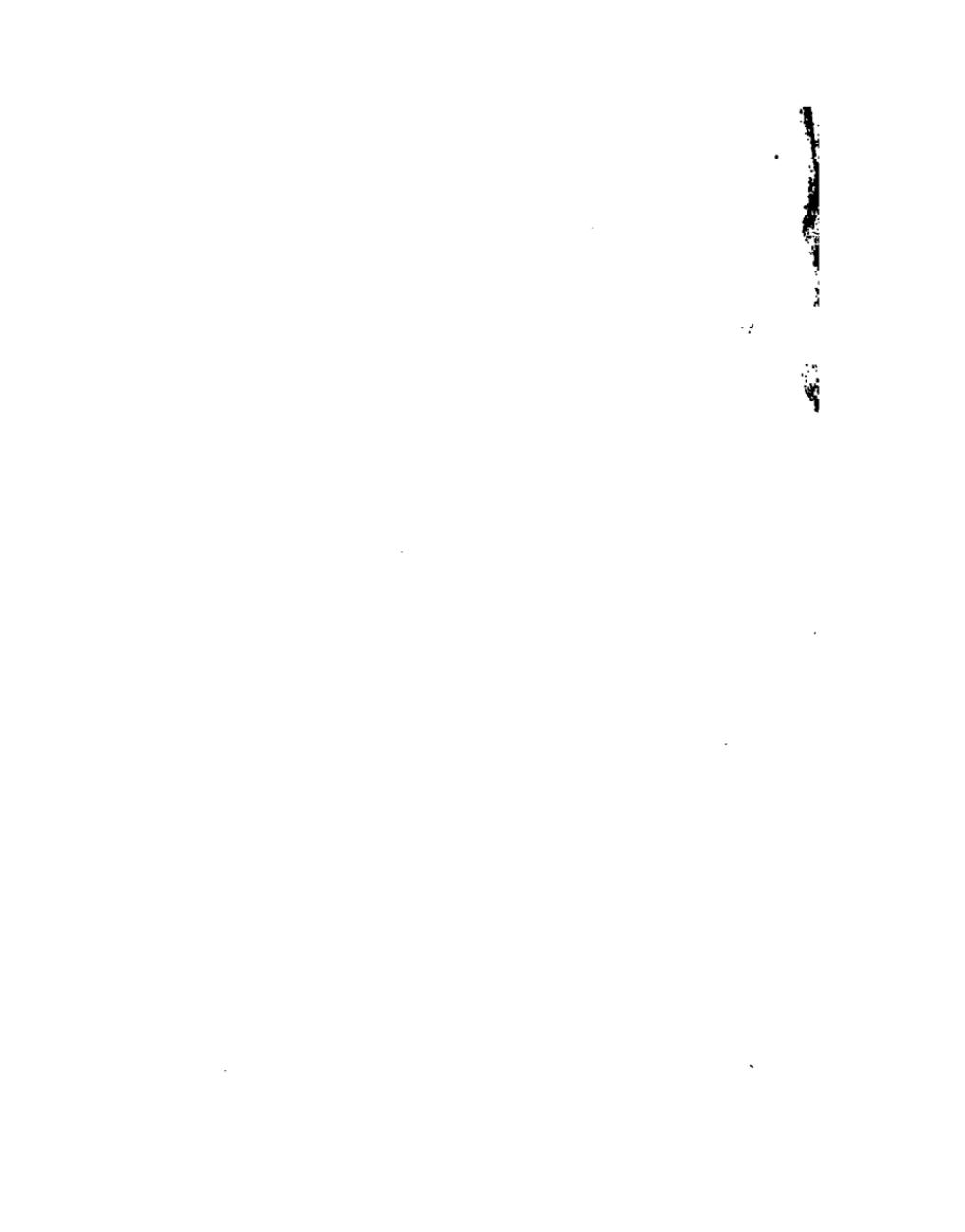
Dickens, who has been called the Shakespeare of the novel, brought out character by caricature. Shakespeare did it by extravagance. Of the two I think Dickens the more powerful delineator.

In my search for a few words of authority for summing up I find the following paragraph from Dr. Johnson's preface the most appropriate to the views here expressed:

"It must be at last confessed that as we owe so much to him he owes something to us; that if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgment, much is likewise given by custom and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another despise. If we endured everything without praising, respect for the father of our drama might excuse us; but I have seen in the book of some modern critic a collection of anomalies which show that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honor."

A great storehouse of human nature is open to us, and the approach need not be made by the avenue of adoration.

**PART II**  
**WALT WHITMAN**



## II

# WALT WHITMAN

SHAKESPEARE AND WHITMAN—is there a parallel? If there is I think you will fail to find it, except in the drivel and snivel of infatuated apologists. Each was great only in his own way.

There were and there are idolators in the field of literature as well as in that of religion. A man of letters, writing to a Whitmaniac, said:

“I don’t believe any man deserves to be spoken of as you speak of your hero, but it must be a delight to you to feel that I am wrong.”

Soon after Whitman’s burial, 1892, one of the disciples wrote:

“I felt as if I had been at the entombment of Christ.”

Hero worship is an attitude; it is loyalty in the concrete; it is safe; it wins.

The greatness of Shakespeare and the grandeur of the Bible are not beyond the reach of common intellects.

A style not wholly unlike parts of the Old Testament was finally adopted by Whitman in his poetical writings. He seems to have convinced himself, as well as some others, that he had an inspired message to deliver.

Probably no other American writer has given rise to so much discussion, to opinions so intense and diverse, as Walt Whitman has. To his defenders he was known as "The Good Gray Poet."

When he chose to do it he could and did write prose that no one who stops to examine it can fail to admire—it is so clean and keen. He wrote a lot of stories and articles, but he said of a book containing his prose writings: "No one cares a damn for the prose." He evidently did not foresee the ways of present-day collectors.

The chief questions his poetical writings have raised are these:

1. Was he a man?
2. Was he a crank?
3. Was he a sensualist?
4. Was he a seer?

5. Was he an artist?
6. Was he a poet?

I

## WAS HE A MAN?

One day in the early sixties a big hairy individual in Washington was observed by Abraham Lincoln. The remark Lincoln is said to have made on this occasion has been cherished by many as a precious utterance: "Well, *he* looks like a MAN!"

That man was Walt Whitman, born near Huntington, Long Island, in 1819. His father was a carpenter and builder, of good New England stock founded in Old England. The ancestry of his mother was Dutch. The family history on both sides was ordinary. Walter, the father's name, was given to the second child, who preferred, when his literary style became set as he wanted it, to be known by the more chummy "Walt." There were nine children, seven boys, two girls. Walt did not marry, but is said to have been the father of six children.

Biographers, critics, interviewers, and acquaintances speak of Whitman as an attractive specimen—tall, hearty, friendly, of little

schooling, and of no extraordinary experiences. He liked the companionship of out-speaking persons, ferryboat pilots, stage drivers, day laborers, clam diggers, rounders, and outcasts. He worked at typesetting, building small houses, writing for and editing newspapers, and versifying. He loved "to loaf and invite his soul." Shiftlessness and slovenliness were not foreign to his nature. His dream was of the ideal race of human beings America would produce under his example and guidance, as the prophet of love, wisdom—and license.

As a young man he was fond of the opera, the atmosphere of Bohemia, gin cocktails, a high hat, and a buttonhole flower. Later he adopted a loose, slouchy, careless mode of dress, with something like morbid vanity. He avowed his "egotism" (really egoism), and wrote review notices of his own work, apparently a proper thing to do in his estimation.

His forte in the line of duty was nursing hospital patients. He has told us the secret of his successful method in these lines:

Softly I lay my right hand upon you—you just feel it, I do not argue—I bend my head close, and half envelop it,

I sit quietly by—I remain faithful,  
I am more than nurse, more than parent or neighbor.

All the questions the plain reader is apt to ask about this man are covered in Bliss Perry's "Walt Whitman," 1906—an admirable piece of brief biographical work (308 pages), considering the bewildering amount of available detail, and the conflict of opinion, about this singular American. Whatever your impression of Whitman may be, you are likely to find that story of his career as interesting as R. H. Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast," which is a vivid chapter of the life of another type of American.

2

### WAS HE A CRANK?

In New England, when a person writes or acts in an unusual way, that person is classified for convenience in conversation as *eccentric*. When that person takes his eccentricity so seriously that the saving grace of humor abides not with him, he is bluntly declared to be *cracked*. Some readers have thought Whitman divine; some, eccentric; some, cracked. To me, after many years of inter-

est, even fascination, in what Whitman wrote and in what was said of him, he seems to have been an earnest self-centered poseur. The modern popular term, exaggerated ego, appears to be pat for his more intense moods.

Without warning it would be unfair to detach lines from his pieces, ignore the license allowed to poets, and make a show picture of his reckless honesty ; and you are to bear this caution in mind if you read the following isolated "yawps," as Whitman called his utterances :

Let him who is without my poems be assassinated!

---

I know I am august;  
I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood ;  
I see that the elementary laws never apologize ;

---

Speech is the twin of my vision—it is unequal to measure itself ;  
It provokes me forever ;  
It says sarcastically, *Walt, you contain enough—why don't you let it out, then?*

---

Do I contradict myself ?  
Very well, then, I contradict myself ;  
(*I am large—I contain multitudes.*)

Shut not your doors to me, proud libraries,  
For that which was lacking on all your well-fill'd  
shelves, yet needed most, I bring;

---

I charge you, too, forever, reject those who would  
expound me—for I cannot expound myself;  
I charge that there be no theory or school founded  
out of me;  
I charge you to leave all free, as I have left all free.

---

I do not doubt that the orbs, and the systems of orbs,  
play their swift sports through the air on pur-  
pose—and that I shall one day be eligible to do  
as much as they, and more than they;

---

I depend on being realized, long hence, where the  
broad fat prairies spread, and thence to Oregon  
and California inclusive,  
I expect that the Texan and the Arizonian, ages  
hence, will understand me,  
I expect that the future Carolinian and Georgian  
will understand me and love me,  
I expect that Canadians, a hundred, and perhaps  
many hundred years from now, in winter, in the  
splendor of the snow and woods, or on the icy  
lakes, will take me with them, and permanently  
enjoy themselves with me.

---

Teacher of the unquenchable creed, namely, egotism,  
Inviter of others continually henceforth to try their  
strength against his.

I know perfectly well my own egotism;  
I know my omnivorous lines, and will not write any  
less;

---

Recorders ages hence!  
Come, I will take you down underneath this im-  
passive exterior—I will tell you what to say  
of me,  
Publish my name and hang up my picture as that of  
the tenderest lover,  
The friend, the lover's portrait, of whom his friend,  
his lover, was fondest,  
Who was not proud of his songs, but of the measure-  
less ocean of love within him—and freely pour'd  
it forth.

To do as you please, to borrow as you need,  
to prate about irresponsibility, to slip through  
the world as a privileged soul, to find a noble  
woman or a grand man who will cuddle, pro-  
tect, and worship you as a genius—that is al-  
lowable under the Declaration, giving all of us  
our individual rights in the “pursuit” of hap-  
piness.

Whitman could grovel a little, on occasion,  
as when he wrote to Emerson in 1856:  
“Master, I am a man of perfect faith.  
Master, we have not come through centuries,  
caste, heroisms, bables, to halt in this land to-

day." Ralph had written to Walt in 1855: "I greet you at the beginning of a great career."

3

WAS HE A SENSUALIST?

This question has been settled, I think, by consensus. His idolators, his appreciators, and his contemners free his writings from the charge of eroticism—pruriency. This they do (I am glad to say) in spite of the "eighty lines" that kept "Leaves of Grass" in the Index Exp. of public opinion, and in spite of the sensuality some persons find in his early portraits. He says:

I am the poet of the Body;  
And I am the poet of the Soul.

---

Walt Whitman am I, a Kosmos, of mighty Manhattan the son,  
Turbulent, fleshy and sensual, eating, drinking and breeding;  
No sentimentalist—no stander above men and women, or apart from them;  
No more modest than immodest.

---

Through me forbidden voices;  
Voices of sexes and lusts—voices veil'd, and I remove the veil;  
Voices indecent, by me clarified and transfigur'd.

He believed he was the Hercules who could do this big job. He declares he is "without shame or the need of shame." He chants: "Give me now libidinous joys only! Give me the drench of passions! Give me life coarse and rank!" He delights to wallow defiantly in the seething sea of the senses. He insists that all things in nature are equally wonderful and pure. He scorns delicate privacy. He triumphantly shouts his slogan: "Copulation is no more rank than death is." His creed is that of the ancient worshippers of Priapus.

I have served as a juryman when there have been "nasty cases" before the court. I have watched the effect of disgusting testimony on men and women of marked refinement and sensibility. Deeds of beastly coarseness, words of revolting content—how foolish nurtured modesty would appear in that place!

Whitman was not content with freedom of speech for time and place. He, being a "Kosmos"; he, being a great deliverer, brutishly tramples down the barriers of decency, and you may protest all you like. It was useless to beseech him to compromise. It is recorded *that late in life* he said: "There are things in

'Leaves of Grass' which I would no sooner write now than cut off my right hand, but I am glad I printed them."

Walt Whitman was no simpleton. He was secretive, shrewd, cunning beyond the comprehension of his disciples. Indecency did for him exactly what bad spelling did for another remarkable American of his day—Josh Billings. Josh could get no recognition, could make no headway with his astonishing acuteness of vision until he caught the trick from Artemus Ward. Then he said: "I think I have struck oil." The enormous army of delighted readers of Josh Billings, many times greater than Whitman's, detested his spelling, but pardoned his obstinacy. Both Josh and Walt knew what they were doing.

As to tender-minded moralists of more than seventeen years of age, how are they to keep from snickering when they come to such lines as these:

Having pried through the strata, analyzed to a hair,  
counsell'd with doctors, and calculated close,  
I find no sweeter fat than sticks to my own bones.

---

It is I, you women—I make my way,  
I am stern, acrid, **large**, undissuadable—but I love  
you,

I do not hurt you any more than is necessary  
you.

I see that they understand me, and do not deny me;  
I see that they are worthy of me—I will be the  
robust husband of those women.

I turn the bridegroom out of bed, and stay with the  
bride myself;

O I will fetch bully breeds of children yet!

I have a friend who likes to trim trees.  
When he gets them as they should be, they  
are too nice for me. I hate a properly edited  
edition of Montaigne, Rousseau, Shakespeare,  
Dryden, or Swift. Whitman's cry was: *I  
am as I am*; and he refused to be edited.

4

WAS HE A SEER?

Emerson was a transcendentalist. Walt  
Whitman was a mystic. He yearned to say  
something that could not be said—to bodily  
shadows. He thought the more reckless, ve-  
hement, and bizarre he was the wiser he must  
be. He took off his hat to the Christ, an  
he thought others should take off their ha-  
to him as a Christ. His message was love  
love of everything—mystic love. Whatever

the word *soul*, or its equivalent, may mean in oriental or home-made philosophy is Whitmanic. He mistook hysterical honesty and outlandish retchings for high thinking. You must work yourself up into the condition of those who "get religion" to see the light of his gospel. Here are specimen lines from various parts of "Leaves of Grass":

O thicker and faster! (*So long!*)  
O crowding too close upon me;  
I foresee too much—it means more than I thought;  
It appears to me I am dying.

---

I swear I think now that everything without exception has an eternal Soul!

---

O to realize space!  
The plenteousness of all—that there are no bounds;  
To emerge, and be of the sky—of the sun and moon, and the flying clouds, as one with them.

---

I give nothing as duties;  
What others give as duties, I give as living impulses;  
(Shall I give the heart's action as a duty?)

---

Great is Wickedness—I find I often admire it, just as much as I admire goodness.  
Do you call that a paradox? It certainly is a paradox.

From this hour, freedom!  
From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and  
    imaginary lines,  
Going where I list, my own master, total and  
    absolute,

---

I cannot say to any person what I hear—I cannot  
say it to myself—it is very wonderful.

---

But these leaves conniving, you con at peril,  
For these leaves, and me, you will not understand,  
They will elude you at first, and still more after-  
    ward—I will certainly elude you,  
Even while you should think you had unquestionably  
    caught me, behold!  
Already you see I have escaped from you.

---

Do you guess I have some intricate purpose?  
Well, I have—for the Fourth-month showers have,  
    and the mica on the side of a rock has.

---

I am a man who, sauntering along, without fully  
    stopping, turns a casual look upon you, and then  
    averts his face,  
Leaving it to you to prove and define it,  
Expecting the main things from you.

---

For I myself am not one who bestows nothing upon  
    man and woman;  
For I bestow upon any man or woman the entrance  
    to all the gifts of the universe.

What is called good is perfect, and what is called bad is just as perfect.

---

I have said many times that materials and the Soul are great, and that all depends on physique; Now I reverse what I said, and affirm that all depends on the æsthetic or intellectual.

---

I have the idea of all, and am all, and believe in all; I believe materialism is true, and spiritualism is true—I reject no part.

To the ordinary reader this kind of wisdom seems to be simply *stuff*. To those who love the mystery of the sphinx it is wondrous. It may tickle Hegelians. To the professional litterateur it is something which affords a fine opportunity for him to display his superior power of discernment. For myself I would say that I prefer to take what Whitman says for what the words mean as language, rather than as the ghosts of aberrant sensations.

When Byron's publisher found fault with him for sometimes writing claptrap he replied that no man could be great all the time. When Walt Whitman shows lack of control, what he exhibits is foolhardiness rather than weakness. It is out and out mental anarchy that causes him to defiantly throw slush. So we

must dodge as best we may. For there is scarcely a page in his book which does not contain something that might well stand alongside quotations from Shakespeare. Only a few of the striking things are here singled out:

How beggarly appear arguments before a defiant deed!

And I say that genius need never more be turned to romances,  
(For facts properly told, how mean appear all romances.)

Give me solitude—give me Nature—give me again, O Nature, your primal sanities!

As I stand aloof and look, there is to me something profoundly affecting in large masses of men, following the lead of those who do not believe in men.

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd;  
I stand and look at them long and long.  
They do not sweat and whine about their condition;  
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins;  
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God;

Not one is dissatisfied—not one is demented with  
the mania of owning things;  
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived  
thousands of years ago;  
Not one is respectable or industrious over the whole  
earth.

---

Anticipate the best women;  
I say an unnumbered new race of hardy and well-  
defined women are to spread through all These  
States,  
I say a girl fit for These States must be free, capable,  
dauntless, just the same as a boy.

---

Youth, large, lusty, loving—Youth, full of grace,  
force, fascination!  
Do you know that Old Age may come after you,  
with equal grace, force, fascination?

---

Camerado! This is no book;  
Who touches this, touches a man.

If Whitman had been an Elizabethan, many  
things he wrote would now be found among  
familiar quotations.

5

WAS HE AN ARTIST?

Recitatives is the term Whitman seems to  
have preferred for his poetical writings.

Chants, carols, and poems are words he also used. Some critics regard his pieces as prose-poems.

He had little patience with poetry as an art bound by rules. He loved artifice, but disdained artistry. Ruggedness, roughness, uncouthness, "barbaric yawps," were his ideal affectations. The conventional methods of others he regarded as cheap, and he called the output "sugary." His own earlier verse, however, was regular in form.

The result was a literary style (which he solemnly bequeathed to the world) that has done about as much for his fame as his "libidinous" outspokenness has. No other manufactured style ever fitted a writer's thoughts better than his style fits his bumping notions. It makes him look outlandish and comical—then suddenly you see something fine or grand or amazing, and you conclude that the style is the man.

Verse means line. We speak of the poetry of the Bible as verses. Whitman's prose-poetry is verse. It is not properly classed as blank verse, which is meter without rhyme. Whitman abandoned rhyme, meter, and regulated rhythm. He said: "I had great trouble

in leaving out the stock poetical touches, but succeeded at last."

He believed his verse to be cadences that would roll and thunder like waves and billows for those who have the kind of soul he tried to imagine. He believed, or pretended to believe, that persons who toil with their hands, day laborers, the illiterate, would hug his book as a vision token, and call him blessed.

He often used what is called the "catalogue trick." That is, he copied or made up lists of objects, parts of the anatomy, names of rivers, mountains, cities, occupations, tools, minerals, or whatnot, attached what he regarded as "suitable" remarks, and considered the product a poem. Whether there is poetry in that sort of thing I do not know, but I feel sure that in some of his pieces it has the effect of a rough and vivid picture.

Another overworked device of his is ejaculation. For example, in two companion pieces every full line but seven begins with O. The interjection O appears in these two pieces one hundred and sixteen times. His idea seems to be (and this shows what his theory of the poetic art really is) that he would do the shouting, and you could do the thinking. He

was a rhapsodist, an impressionist—a kind of up-to-you artist.

His stock in trade in ordinary literary artistry was the rhythmic effect shown in this conventional line: "When lilacs last in the door-yard bloom'd." This form of undulation he used with noticeable frequency. A distant ship under sail gave the first poetic impulse he remembered.

The exact style of Whitman (as shown in Perry's book) had been utilized years before "Leaves of Grass" appeared by the author of that justly famous novel, "Ten Thousand a Year." Forms similar to Whitman's had been used by others before he used them, including, I find, translators of Chinese literature, who found that that style of writing gave the desired atmosphere to their work. Whether Whitman ever saw any of these pieces is not known, and is wholly unimportant. The Whitman style is as much Whitman's as the styles of Carlyle, Stevenson, and Henry James are theirs. It lends itself so readily to parody that there can be no doubt, in spite of its perverse lawlessness, that it is a style. And I think it somehow suffices.

## WAS HE A POET?

Certainly yes.

The poems popularly known as Whitman's best are: "O Captain! My Captain!" "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloom'd," and "Death Carol." These pieces and others of the majestic type are well suited to his method.

I have never been infatuated with his conception of the sublime, but have often shivered with fascination under the spell of his minor visions. It is in his seemingly unpremeditated, if not unconscious, mastery of the elusive details of the beautiful that his genius appears to me to be effulgent. Where is there anything simpler, clearer, or more truly poetic than this word picture of a "Bivouac on a Mountain Side":

I see before me now, a traveling army halting;  
Below, a fertile valley spread, with barns, and the  
orchards of summer;  
Behind, the terraced sides of a mountain, abrupt in  
places, rising high;  
Broken, with rocks, with clinging cedars, with tall  
shapes, dingly seen;  
The numerous camp-fires scatter'd near and far,  
some away up on the mountain,

The shadowy forms of men and horses, looming,  
    large-sized, flickering;  
And over all, the sky—the sky! far, far out of reach,  
    studded, breaking out, the eternal stars.

And this stanza from “President Lincoln’s Burial Hymn” is surely true poetry:

In the door-yard fronting an old farm-house, near  
    the whitewash’d palings,  
Stands the lilac bush, tall-growing, with heart-shaped  
    leaves of rich green,  
With many a pointed blossom, rising, delicate, with  
    the perfume strong I love,  
With every leaf a miracle . . . and from this bush  
    in the door-yard,  
With delicate-color’d blossoms, and heart-shaped  
    leaves of rich green,  
A sprig, with its flower, I break.

And here in his “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” is the reflection from the river of the pensive quiet even the lowliest of us have sometimes longed to be able to put into words:

Others will enter the gates of the ferry, and cross  
    from shore to shore;  
Others will watch the run of the flood-tide;  
Others will see the shipping of Manhattan north and  
    west, and the heights of Brooklyn to the south  
    and east;  
*Others will see the islands large and small;*

Fifty years hence, others will see them as they cross,  
the sun half an hour high;  
A hundred years hence, or ever so many hundred  
years hence, others will see them,  
Will enjoy the sunset, the pouring in of the flood-  
tide, the falling back to the sea of the ebb-tide.

And here is a complete poem, "Sparkles  
from the Wheel." Is it not a wonderful  
etching?

I

Where the city's ceaseless crowd moves on, the live-  
long day,  
Withdrawn, I join a group of children watching—  
I pause aside with them.

By the curb, toward the edge of the flagging,  
A knife-grinder works at his wheel, sharpening a  
great knife;  
Bending over, he carefully holds it to the stone—  
by foot and knee,  
With measur'd tread, he turns rapidly—As he presses  
with light but firm hand,  
Forth issue, then, in copious golden jets,  
Sparkles from the wheel.

2

The scene, and all its belongings—how they seize and  
affect me!  
The sad, sharp-chinn'd old man, with worn clothes,  
and broad shoulder-band of leather;  
Myself, effusing and fluid—a phantom curiously float-  
ing—now here absorb'd and arrested;

The group, (an unminded point, set in a vast surrounding;)  
The attentive, quiet children—the loud, proud, restive  
base of the streets;  
The low, hoarse purr of the whirling stone—the  
light-press'd blade,  
Diffusing, dropping, sideways-darting, in tiny showers  
of gold,  
Sparkles from the wheel.

And here is “A Noiseless, Patient Spider”:  
A noiseless, patient spider,  
I mark'd, where, on a little promontory, it stood,  
isolated;  
Mark'd how, to explore the vacant, vast surrounding,  
It launch'd forth filament, filament, filament, out of  
itself;  
Ever unreeling them—ever tirelessly speeding them.

And you, O my soul, where you stand,  
Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans of  
space,  
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing,—seeking  
the spheres, to connect them;  
  
Till the bridge you will need, be form'd—till the  
—ductile anchor hold;  
Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch somewhere,  
O my Soul.

And there are other moods and tenses. Note  
this:

## I

Yet, yet, ye downcast hours, I know ye also;  
 Weights of lead, how ye clog and cling at my ankles!  
 Earth to a chamber of mourning turns—I hear the  
 o'erweening, mocking voice,  
*Matter is conqueror—matter, triumphant only, con-*  
*tinues onward.*

## 2

Despairing cries float ceaselessly toward me,  
 The call of my nearest lover, putting forth, alarm'd,  
 uncertain,  
*The Sea I am quickly to sail, come tell me,*  
*Come tell me where I am speeding—tell me my*  
*destination.*

And here is a lively scene, perhaps matchless as an example of condensed description:  
 O the whaleman's joys! O I cruise my old cruise again!  
 I feel the ship's motion under me—I feel the Atlantic breezes fanning me,  
 I hear the cry again sent down from the mast-head—  
*There—she blows!*  
 —Again I spring up the rigging, to look with the rest—We see—we descend, wild with excitement,  
 I leap in the lower'd boat—We row toward our prey, where he lies,  
 We approach, stealthy and silent—I see the mountainous mass, lethargic, basking,  
 I see the harpooner standing up—I see the weapon dart from his vigorous arm:

O swift, again, now, far out in the ocean, the wounded whale, settling, running to windward, tows me;  
—Again I see him rise to breathe—We row close again,  
I see a lance driven through his side, press'd deep, turn'd in the wound,  
Again we back off—I see him settle again—the life is leaving him fast,  
As he rises, he spouts blood—I see him swim in circles narrower and narrower, swiftly cutting the water—I see him die;  
He gives one convulsive leap in the centre of the circle, and then falls flat and still in the bloody foam.

And here is a bit of the kind of sentiment that lurks in the caverns of every human heart:

Ah, from a little child,  
Thou knowest, Soul, how to me all sounds became music;  
My mother's voice, in lullaby or hymn;  
(The voice—O tender voices—memory's loving voices!  
Last miracle of all—O dearest mother's, sister's, voices;) The rain, the growing corn, the breeze among the long-leav'd corn,  
The measur'd sea-surf, beating on the sand,

The twittering bird, the hawk's sharp scream,  
The wild-fowl's notes at night, as flying low, migrating north or south,  
The psalm in the country church, or mid the clustering trees, the open air camp-meeting,  
The fiddler in the tavern—the glee, the long-strung sailor-song,  
The lowing cattle, bleating sheep—the crowing cock at dawn.

And here is a "Thought" that none but a poet could get complete into a few lines:

As I sit with others, at a great feast, suddenly while the music is playing,  
To my mind, (whence it comes I know not,) spectral, in mist, of a wreck at sea;  
Of certain ships—how they sail from port with flying streamers, and wafted kisses—and that is the last of them!  
Of the solemn and murky mystery about the fate of the President;  
Of the flower of the marine science of fifty generations, founder'd off the Northeast coast, and going down—Of the steamship Arctic going down,  
Of the veil'd tableau—Women gather'd together on deck, pale, heroic, waiting the moment that draws so close—O the moment!  
A huge sob—A few bubbles—the white foam spiring up—And then the women gone,  
Sinking there, while the passionless wet flows on—

And I now pondering, Are those women indeed  
gone?  
Are Souls drown'd and destroy'd so?  
Is only matter triumphant?

And here is a photographic effect, disclosing  
a common feeling that any one might suppose  
peculiar to oneself.

When I heard the learn'd astronomer;  
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns  
before me;  
When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to  
add, divide, and measure them;  
When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he  
lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,  
How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick;  
Till rising and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself,  
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to  
time,  
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

And here are some lines that show how a  
poet can give beauty to the most ignoble sub-  
ject:

Behold this compost! behold it well!  
Perhaps every mite has once form'd part of a sick  
person—Yet behold!  
The grass of spring covers the prairies,  
The bean bursts noiselessly through the mould in the  
garden,  
The delicate spear of the onion pierces upward,

The apple-buds cluster together on the apple-branches,  
The resurrection of the wheat appears with pale visage out of its graves,  
The tinge awakes over the willow-tree and the mulberry-tree.

And, finally, in the midst of so much that is fine, or beautiful, or grand, or surprising, I force myself to stop extracting with this average specimen of Whitman's work as a poet:

Of persons arrived at high positions, ceremonies, wealth, scholarships, and the like;  
To me, all that those persons have arrived at, sinks away from them, except as it results to their Bodies and Souls,  
So that often to me they appear gaunt and naked;  
And often, to me, each one mocks the others, and mocks himself or herself,  
And of each one, the core of life, namely happiness, is full of the rotten excrement of maggots,  
And often, to me, those men and women pass unwittingly the true realities of life, and go toward false realities,  
And often, to me, they are alive after what custom has served them, but nothing more,  
And often, to me, they are sad, hasty, unwaked sonambules, walking the dusk.

If we cannot agree in our opinions of Walt Whitman's verse, we can at least bring our-

selves to view his work with less prejudice or infatuation than has been shown by those who have taken sides against or for him. We can lay aside our moral or artistic bias for the occasion, and browse now and then on "Leaves of Grass" with calmness.

The only way to read any poet is a little at a time, when you feel like it. Turn to Whitman's "Drum Taps." Read and reread a page or two, and you will be glad he lived as he lived, thought as he thought, and wrote as he wrote.

It is the selfish idolatry of untrained zealots on the one hand, and the priggish pretension of literary aristocrats on the other that have shut out so many of us from a loving companionship with Shakespeare and Walt Whitman as they are.

Here are a few sane and enlightening lines by Stevenson, which I have taken the liberty of selecting from his critique and arranging in the form of a Whitmanic doxology:

I

Whitman has small regard to literary decencies;  
And is totally free from literary timidities.  
He is neither afraid of being slangy,  
Nor of being dull,

Nor of being ridiculous.

The result is a most surprising compound of plain  
grandeur, sentimental affectation  
And downright nonsense.

2

One thing is certain—

That no one can appreciate Whitman excellencies  
until he has grown accustomed to his faults.  
Until you are content to pick poetry out of his pages  
almost as you must pick it out of a Greek play  
in Bohn's translation,

I say your gravity will be continually upset,  
Your ears perpetually disappointed.

The whole book will be no more to you than flagrant.

3

To show beauty in common things—

It is not to be done by the wishing.

To bring it home to men's minds is the problem of  
literature.

4

To speak with some plainness on what is  
(For I really do not know what reason)

The most delicate of subjects;

To set the sanctity of fatherhood beside the sanctity  
of motherhood;

To introduce this also among the things that can be  
spoken of without either a blush or a wink—

But to say truth, Whitman has rather played the fool.  
We are not satisfied.

We feel that he was not the man for so difficult  
an enterprise.

A bull in a china shop;

61

When by a little more art we might have been  
solemnized ourselves.

5

It seems hardly possible that any being should get  
evil from so healthy a book as "Leaves of  
Grass,"

Which is simply comical whenever it falls short of  
nobility.

But if there are any such,  
Who cannot both take and leave,  
Who cannot let a single opportunity pass without  
some unworthy and unmanly thought,  
I should have as great difficulty,  
And neither more nor less,  
In recommending the works of Whitman as in lend-  
ing them Shakespeare.

There was a sign on a building across the  
square that was frequently pointed out to  
persons as they walked down the main street  
of the city of my schoolboy days. It showed  
in large letters the legend: PAINTING.  
If you looked at it again when opposite you  
saw only the name: OSGOOD. Another  
glance as you walked away from it revealed  
only the announcement: SIGNS.

Whether you are coming, standing opposite,  
or going, please read Whitman.

THE END

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

---

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Vocabulary of Checkers, . . . . .                       | \$2.00 |
| Literature of Checkers . . . . .                        | 1.00   |
| R. D. Yates, Checker Player, . . . . .                  | 1.00   |
| Kboo: The Counting Game, . . . . .                      | .25    |
| Scientific Solitaire, . . . . .                         | .25    |
| Shorthand for General Use, . . . . .                    | .50    |
| Ten Great Little Poems, . . . . .                       | .50    |
| You and I and the Stars, . . . . .                      | .50    |
| The Little Grammar, . . . . .                           | .50    |
| New Method in Multiplication and<br>Division, . . . . . | .50    |
| Midget Problems in Checkers, . . . . .                  | .50    |
| Life As It Is, . . . . .                                | .50    |
| Boy's Book on Logic, . . . . .                          | .50    |
| A Plea for Shakespeare and Whitman                      | .50    |

---

W. T. CALL,  
669 E. 32d Street, Brooklyn, N. Y.

2

161

